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***Mosquito Trapping in Milwaukee County Yields First Positive for West Nile Virus
First "positive WNV infected mosquito pool" in Wisconsin this season***

The City of Milwaukee Health Department (MHD) was notified by the Marshfield Clinic this afternoon of the first West Nile Virus (WNV) positive mosquito pool collected from within Milwaukee County for the 2003 season. The finding of a WNV infected mosquito also represents the first positive mosquito pool for the State of Wisconsin this year.

"Understanding the level of WNV infectivity in mosquitoes is important in estimating the probability of human WNV infection in the community," stated Paul Biedrzycki, Manager of Disease Control and Prevention for the Milwaukee Health Department. "In anticipation of this finding, the City of Milwaukee in coordination with other municipal local health departments in the County has initiated targeted larvicide application of select mosquito breeding places this past June. These larvicide applications will continue throughout the season along with emphasis on mosquito avoidance and habitat source reduction as the best means of reducing widespread WNV outbreak or illness in the community," Biedrzycki said.

Human WNV infection occurs through the bite of an infected mosquito. Mosquitoes become infected through biting birds carrying the virus. Within Milwaukee County, there are approximately 46 traps that have been set-up to monitor and evaluate the type of mosquito and level of infectivity in the region. The City of Milwaukee also has contacted hospital emergency departments and other healthcare providers to be on the lookout of WNV infection in patients during the coming months.

Some recent developments in the prevention, diagnosis and therapy of WNV include: The CDC announced progress in the development of a WNV vaccine that would provide protection to individuals including the most susceptible in the community including the elderly, very young and those persons with underlying chronic health conditions or are immuno-compromised. The FDA has also recently announced the development of a rapid diagnostic WNV test to be used by laboratories and clinicians that will enhance detection and surveillance for WNV nationwide. Finally, the CDC stated that screening of blood supplies for WNV has been initiated as of July 1, 2003 to ensure protection of blood recipients from infection.

More

The MHD is coordinating a number of activities within Milwaukee County in response to WNV infection prevention and control. These include surveillance, public awareness and mosquito control measures. While overall, the risk of serious WNV human infection is low, personal preventative measures are recommended especially for the most susceptible persons in the community, primarily the elderly, young children and persons with underlying medical and chronic health conditions. These include:

- Avoid outdoors between dusk and dawn when mosquitoes tend to be most active.
- Wear light colored long sleeve shirts and pants when outdoors.
- Use mosquito repellant containing DEET when outdoors.
- Ensure that screens, windows and doors are in good repair to prevent entry of mosquitoes.
- Eliminate stagnant water around the home that may serve as mosquito-breeding places including water in birdbaths, wading pools, clogged rain gutters, old tires and buckets.

Further information for the public on WNV can be found at www.milwaukee.gov/health or by calling your local health department. **In the City of Milwaukee, individuals can call 414-286-3606.**

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